

IS SUCCESS YOUR BIGGEST PROBLEM?

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When you first started in business, your prime consideration was probably related to getting enough paying customers to ensure sufficient cash flow. The thing that attracted customers to you was the unique value you offered and this was not necessarily related to just your prices. After a time you may have even developed relationships with many of your customers, which meant that they wanted to deal with you exclusively. As time went on, you continued to give your customers 'outstanding value' and this was rewarded by the growth of your business.

This is the scenario for many successful businesses which raises a new issue (we call it an opportunity) for many – that of '**extendibility**'. The very thing that attracted customers to you puts you in jeopardy if it cannot be extended and replicated as your customer base grows.

Growth issues include: the right staff, appropriate processes and systems, the right finance, span of management control, extending services geographically and appropriate premises. We can also recognize the problem signs – not meeting customer needs, increased complaints, dissatisfied staff, inefficiencies through congestion, blockages that are more regular and harder to fix, and the need for the business owner to be more 'hands-on'.

That's why successful business owners should ask themselves the question "**If my business doubled in size, what would I need to do to be able to give the same or better service than I offer now?**" If you don't know the answer, then your future success in terms of attracting more customers may well be the biggest problem you will face.

There is a truism in business that says "*a problem well defined is a problem half solved*". Businesses need to thoroughly examine their current situation as it applies to their future capacity to grow and maintain all aspects of the quality they provide. They then need to identify the major issues that will confront them and the implications of each issue. From this they will develop a list of needs which forces them to develop the strategies and solutions upon which future extendibility will be based.

If you cannot guarantee the same quality of service during times of growth then success may well be the biggest problem to face.